

****ATTENTION****

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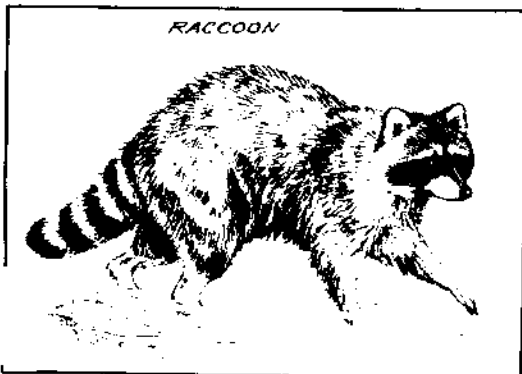
The Role of Trapping in Wildlife Conservation



WHY DO WE TRAP?

Man uses the resources of the land to feed, clothe, provide shelter and to maintain his standard of living. Many of the resources used are both domestic and wild crops that are produced annually or periodically and are constantly being renewed. Trapping, or the harvesting of surplus furbearers is the end result of Scientific Wildlife Resource Management. Furbearers, by nature, are nocturnal. They cannot be harvested effectively by any other method.

MANAGEMENT



Everything we do today is managed to some extent. We manage our cities, we manage our forests, we manage our food products; we even manage our lives and daily activities. Management can best be described as the most reasonable and beneficial, planned use of a product or resource. Modern Wildlife Resource Management is based upon scientific data and sound practical experience, with the ultimate responsibility of preserving and perpetuating the resource and regulating its proper use. We have progressed beyond the point in time where Mother Nature can be left to her own!

We are all part of the environment. We must manage all our resources wisely if we are going to continue to enjoy our present standard of living. The abundant wildlife we have today can be directly attributed to the scientific management programs of the past fifty years.

DISEASE CONTROL



Domestic livestock, food crops, and other directly controlled resources are monitored and treated continually to insure a healthy and productive resource. We can only monitor wildlife diseases through periodic biological sampling. There is no possible way to treat disease outbreaks. The only effective control is through species population control. It is common knowledge that unchecked population growth leads to serious disease problems. The trappers of Washington have been providing a valuable service to the people of this state through a cooperative disease-monitoring program with state health authorities. For several years they have been submitting requested blood and other samples of trapped animals from suspected disease-carrying wildlife populations. This monitoring program has identified numerous areas of water contamination ... "Beaver Fever", and early treatment and precautionary actions have prevented widespread illness to humans. Bubonic plague has been found in several areas of the state, and officials have been able to take the necessary steps to prevent possible transmission to humans.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

This phrase has an appealing ring to it ... but a living example can be seen in India where cows, monkeys, dogs and rats consume human food unmolested. These animals have been given rights. It takes questionable maturity for people to accept this concept. We must bear in mind that we do not create a right. In practical terms, a right can only be allocated. If one animal is given a right, that same right must be taken away from another animal or man. If we give a muskrat or raccoon a constitutional right not to be trapped or harvested, it is at the expense of the waterfowl and other birds that will find their habitat invaded or destroyed, and their eggs or young consumed. It is also at the expense of the farmer and landowner. The "animal rights" slogan must be identified for what it really is ... a lever by which a few people wish to translate their preferences into law. The slogan confuses the issue. It is aimed at the urban dweller who is in the political majority, and who is isolated from the real world of nature. This urban dweller does not have to deal with the consequences of his political decisions concerning animals, but can afford to think of them in an idealized way. Today, more than ever before, knowledgeable people recognize the role trapping plays in wildlife management, and see that trapping is a legitimate use of a renewable wildlife resource.



ANIMAL RIGHTS ... (Cont'd)

On the other hand, there are some opponents to trapping, whose means and expenditures have raised questions relating to professional wildlife management. It is ironic that they have not responsibly concerned themselves with the facts. Their use of emotional advertising in magazines and newspapers to solicit funds by showing pictures of trapped animals, is of questionable integrity. These people know little of the situation about which they are so vocal. However, this lack of knowledge does not prevent them from espousing a point of view that is dangerously extreme and a definite threat to the well-being of the very animals they are striving to protect. Unfortunately, critics of trapping express more concern over the quality of death rather than the quality of life!

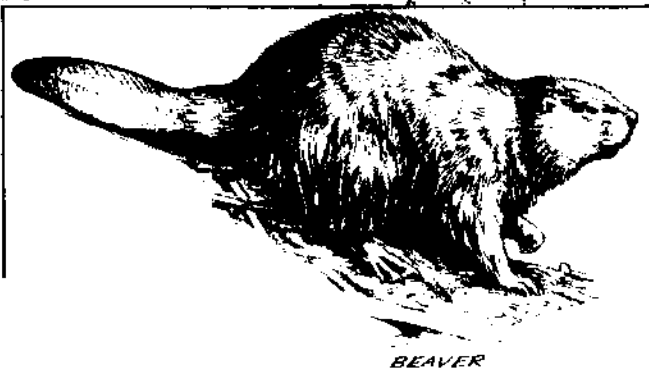
THE TRAPPING PROCESS

There are those who maintain that all trapping is cruel and inhumane. Let us remember that death in the wild is never peaceful or painless. In the wild there are no hospitals to ease pain and suffering, there are no grocery stores to provide food when animals are starving, and there are no heated dwellings to prevent wildlife from freezing. During the times of plenty, wildlife flourishes and life expands, however, during the winter and times of want, wildlife numbers must inevitably die back to the population level that can be supported by the available habitat. Trappers and hunters remove a scientifically determined number of surplus birds and animals from the environment each year. The wildlife that remains when the time of plenty returns is healthier and more productive. Is it any less humane to be harvested by man than it is to die a lingering death by starvation, predation or disease? Ninety-two percent of all furbearers trapped are aquatic or water-associated. When caught, they quickly drown in a matter of seconds. Is this not humane? Terrestrial, or land-based animals are caught in traps that are designed to hold the animal until dispatched. Many laws are in effect which ensure that these animals are taken as humanely as possible.



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Furbearers are a valuable crop of the land. Each year, the crop is renewed. Thousands of people, whether they be trappers, buyers, fur processors, garment makers, or retailers, derive all or part of their livelihood from the harvested crop. There are those who maintain that it is not right to use these animals, yet we systematically harvest our forests, we slaughter our livestock for meat, leather and wool, and we harvest the fish from the sea. There are those who maintain that it is wrong to wear a garment made of real fur, yet the fake furs are made from non-renewable, petroleum products that benefit foreign countries and create air and water pollution during the manufacturing process. If the licensed



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ... (Cont'd)

trappers were not taking their annual harvest from the environment, untold millions would have to be spent on government control programs that would have to rely on poisons. Livestock growers would be confronted with intolerable predation losses.

TRAPPER ETHICS

In any activity, no matter how large or small, there are unwanted, unforeseen, and sometimes tragic occurrences. Trapping is no exception.



A FEW MORE BITES
THEN TIMBER R-R...

When this does occur it is usually the result of illegal activities, ignorance, or lack of knowledge. The State of Washington has an active and progressive Trapper Training Program which is required by law. The program is a joint effort of the State Trapper's Association and the State Game Department. The primary thrust of the program is not to just train the student in the art of proper techniques, but more importantly, to accept his or her responsibilities as a trapper, as a conservationist, and as a respected member of our society.

MORAL ISSUE

Morality is an issue of the mind. This is true of all contested matters. Trapping, however, is more often judged on an emotional basis rather than on logistical or biological information. The general public has been subjected to forty years of the "Bambi Syndrome".



While this has been enjoyed by all, it has created a generation that has misconceptions of what the real outdoor world is all about.

Mother Nature can be "kind or cruel" ... "beautiful or harsh".

Let us all protect, enjoy, nurture, and use our wonderful outdoor world!

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